trasts and resemblances, recalls almost forgotten cases which had perplexed or baffled him, turns over the leaves with the object of finding some information concerning them, and is invariably successful. Such a case was reported by the writer in 1881,[1] under the title of "Asynchronous Contraction of the Cardiac Ventricles, with Remarks upon Reduplication of Heart-sounds," a similar one having been reported by Leyden in 1868. On page 403, DaCosta says: "A peculiar kind of irregular action of the heart has been much discussed under the name of *hemisystole.* Leyden pointed out that there were cases in which with every two beats of the heart only one beat of the pulse was felt, and attributed this to the right ventricle alone contracting alternately with the left. Different explanations of the fact have been given by different authors, but the observations of Riegel and Lachmann, while they do not strictly confirm the alternate action of the ventricles as the cause of the phenomenon point to irregular contraction of the muscles of the heart as the cause."

This, although interesting, is somewhat inconclusive, and the question seems to be one in which the *a priori* improbability of asynchronous ventricular contraction is allowed too much weight. The possibility of independent contraction of the ventricles has been demonstrated by Prof. W. Gilman Thompson, of New York, in his valuable paper on the "Movements of the Heart," in the *Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences*, vol. iii. p. 571. He paralyzed the right ventricle of a pigeon's heart by injection of aconite, and then stimulated the left ventricle to contract by glonoin, one per cent., applied externally. An instantaneous photograph, taken during the application, showed the right ventricle to lie "like a loose cover on top of the firmly-contracted left ventricle." While this does not actually demonstrate alternate ventricular contraction, it would, we think, show its possibility even in the absence of the clinical facts which, in our opinion, indicate it.

This case has been alluded to chiefly with the object of showing the confidence with which one may turn to this work for enlightenment upon the anomalies of clinical experience and is but one of many examples of the sort.

The book is typographically almost perfect, the only error of the sort being so glaring as to explain itself. We refer to the statement that the number of white blood-corpuscles is to the red as one to fifty, it being scarcely necessary to say that the printer has omitted a cipher in the last number.

F. P. H.

FAMILIAR FORMS OF NERVOUS DISEASE. By M. ALLEN STARR, M.D., PH.D., etc. New York: W. Wood & Co., 1890.

DR. STARR has written, as was to be expected, a very readable and useful book. The title is unfortunate, for it cannot be said that some of the diseases most fully described in this work, involving as they do some of the most complex questions of cerebral and spinal localization, are familiar; especially to the "general practitioner," for whom the book appears to be written. As the title implies, the work is not a systematic treatise on nervous diseases, but a collection of papers on some of the more *prevalent* diseases of the nervous system. Such a scheme has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it permits the author to address himself more directly to the profession at large, and to attempt to lift his great subject out of the narrow rut of specialism in which some desire to keep it. There is nothing in Dr. Starr's book but what ought to be known to every practising physician and surgeon in the land, and it will have served its purpose well if it helps to make *familiar* some forms of nervous disease which are to many as yet a mystery. On the other hand, Dr. Starr's book may be thought by some, because of its author's self-imposed limitations, to savor of incompleteness. On this we express no opinion, but are content to take the book on its merits, which are many, and to hope that its author may in the ample future rise to the dignity of a more complete treatise.

---

[1] Archives of Medicine, August, 1881.

More than one-half of the book is devoted to a study of the localization of lesions in the cortex, the basal region, and the cord. This is not only the most important half of the book, but for simplicity and brevity it is one of the best clinical studies of the subject of which we have knowledge. It is founded largely upon the author's own clinical and pathological work, which gives it freshness and additional value. The cortical areas governing language are especially well described, with lesions affecting them. The complicated subjects of aphasia, agraphia, word-blindness, and word-deafness are so clearly outlined that it seems to us they cannot be difficult to comprehend, as far, at least, as our present knowledge extends. The localization of spinal cord disease, which has assumed so much importance in recent surgery, is described in two very full chapters, well illustrated. Dr. Starr's well-known studies of the segments of the cord are here reproduced in tabular form.

The surgery of the brain and cord, while not by any means slighted by Dr. Starr, might perhaps have been more fully discussed, and more credit given to the as yet not over-large number of workers in these two fields. Dr. White and Dr. Deaver, both of Philadelphia, have performed notable operations for spinal cord lesion. The latter's case, if we mistake not, was one of the first operated on in this country, and while from the nature of the case the operation was not successful, it threw a not unimportant light upon the subject; while Dr. White's case was followed by quite brilliant results. The author, however, shows a wise conservatism on the subject of brain and cord surgery, which undoubtedly has been in danger of being overdone.

The next most important subject in the book is multiple neuritis, which is treated of rather briefly. The chapter is a concise statement, and seems to us to be an abridgement of Dr. Starr's more elaborate lectures on the same topic published a few years since.

The remainder of the book is mostly occupied by papers by Drs. Skinner, Peterson, Vought, and Goodkind on locomotor ataxia, paralysis agitans, chorea, and the "ordinary forms of insanity." This last-mentioned paper on insanity, by Dr. Peterson, is quite a notable production, in which, if he does not exhaust the subject in fifteen pages, he at least gives a very condensed statement of diseases of the mind. He adopts a classification for the benefit of the "general practitioner," which German writers would probably regard as a reversion to a lower, or at least a *primitive* type. In this we believe he is in accord with advanced pathological work, and that the future will see a more simple classification of the insanities than some of those now in vogue. All the papers by Dr. Starr's clinical assistants are founded upon cases observed in the Vanderbilt clinic, and are rather in the nature of reports of good work done in dispensary practice than of complete monographs upon their individual subjects.

The book closes with a very timely chapter on electricity as a therapeutic agent. Dr. Starr does not hesitate to show his scepticism on a subject about which too many therapeutists are at loose ends. His conclusions are that static electricity offers nothing beyond an interrupted galvanic current; that the constant galvanic current has electrolytic and cataphoric action, and aids nutritition; that the interrupted galvanic and the faradic currents also aid nutrition; that organic nervous diseases cannot be influenced by electricity; and, finally, that functional nervous diseases are often benefited in an uncertain way by the empirical use of this agent. All of which we firmly believe are correct.

J. H. L.

A MANUAL OF MODERN SURGERY: AN EXPOSITION OF THE ACCEPTED DOCTRINES AND APPROVED OPERATIVE PROCEDURES OF THE PRESENT TIME. By JOHN B. ROBERTS, A.M., M.D., Professor of Surgery in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania; Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the Philadelphia Polyclinic; Lecturer in Anatomy in the University of Pennsylvania. 8vo., pp. 800, with five hundred and one illustrations. Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Co., 1890.

THE title Modern Surgery is entirely justified, for the reader will find very little of tradition within these pages which has not withstood the strong light of recent criticism and investigation. Not a small advantage of a new book is the absence of the necessity for modernizing old material from former editions, and in this instance, from first to last, the thought is essentially modern. Of necessity, much depends upon the personal opinion of the author as to what views shall be given as the best. It is not to be expected, for instance, that all surgeons of to-day will endorse the preference given to the hooks in the treatment of fractured patella. Indeed, many consider their use quite as unjustifiable as our author thinks wiring to be. Not often does it happen, however, that his convictions fail to coincide with generally-received opinion.

The attitude of the work upon the various abdominal and intestinal operations is quite in accordance with late views of the best abdominal surgeons. He counsels early operation, rapidity, accuracy, cleanliness, irrigation and drainage, with little or no opium, and these are the essentials of success.

The section on compound fractures is well up to date, and gives a clear statement of methods and results as seen in good hospitals of the present day. The same is true of the discussion of extensive contused and lacerated wounds. Instead of the arbitrary terms "simple" and